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to explain the cause by which this portrait came into the possession of an individual who is happy in relinquishing it to grace the Hall of Meeting of the Royal Society.

"I have the honour to subscribe myself,
 "Your Lordship's very obedient humble Servant,
 "CHARLES VIGNOLLES."

"*The Right Honourable the Marquess of Northampton,*
&c. &c. &c.
President of the Royal Society."

The following papers were read, viz.—

1. "A Meteorological Journal for 1840, kept at Allenheads, Northumberland, with a few remarks on the Rain-gauge." By the Rev. W. Walton, F.R.S.

The author shows that if the mouth of a rain-gauge be placed in any plane which is not perfectly horizontal, the results will be liable to inaccuracy, whatever may be the direction in which the rain falls. He thinks that, on many occasions, the drops of rain diminish in their size during their descent on entering warmer regions of the atmosphere, so as finally to disappear.

2. "The Scholar's Lute among the Chinese." By — Lay, Esq. Communicated by S. H. Christie, Esq., Sec. R.S.

The Kin, which is the stringed instrument here described, was the one played upon by Confucius and the sages of antiquity, and is therefore held sacred by men of letters. It is made of the Woo-tung, or *Dryandria cordifolia*. It is convex above and plane below, and is wider at one end than at the other; it has two quadrangular apertures in the plane surface, which open into as many hollows within the body of the instrument: and it is furnished with seven silken strings of different diameters, which pass over the smaller end, and are distributed between two immovable pegs below. A bridge within a short distance of the wider extremity gives these strings the necessary elevation and a passage to the under surface, where, by means of a row of pegs, they are tightened or relaxed at pleasure. The length of the sounding-board is divided by thirteen studs of nacre, or mother-of-pearl, as a guide for the performer; and they are placed so that the length of each string is bisected, trisected, &c., that is, divided into aliquot parts as far as the eighth subdivision, with the omission of the seventh, the number of sections being represented by the arithmetical series

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 0, 8.

Thus the intervals, or magnitudes of the different tones sounded by this instrument, do not accord with those produced on our violin, but agree more with the old Scotch music. The study of this instrument, and the art of playing upon it, are rendered extremely difficult by the complexity of the Chinese notation of written music, which leads to frequent omissions and blunders. Thus every air which a Chinese plays has cost him the labour of many months to learn; and so tiresome is this acquisition, that the author has heard

some extemporize very prettily without being able to play a single air. Their performance, however, is very graceful; and though the melody be simple, every scope is given to variety by the mode of touching the strings. The author enters into an examination of the musical theory of the sounds produced by this instrument.

The Society then adjourned over the Easter Recess, to meet again on the 22nd instant.

April 22, 1841.

The MARQUIS of NORTHAMPTON, President, in the Chair.

William Bowman, Esq., was balloted for and duly elected into the Society.

The following papers were read, viz.—

1. Magnetic-term Observations taken on board H.M.S. Erebus and Terror, at Hobart Town, on the 29th and 30th August, and the 23rd and 24th September, 1840, by, and under the direction of James Clark Ross, Captain R.N., F.R.S., and Commander of the Antarctic Expedition.

2. Magnetic-term Observations made at the fixed Magnetic Observatory, Van Diemen's Land, on the 28th, 29th and 30th August, and the 23rd and 24th September, 1840; by James Clark Ross, Captain R.N., F.R.S., Commander of the Antarctic Expedition.

3. Hourly Magnetic Observations for August and September, 1840, taken at the Ship's Magnetic Observatory, Van Diemen's Land, under the direction of James Clark Ross, Captain R.N., F.R.S., Commander of the Antarctic Expedition.

The above papers were communicated by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

4. Variation de la déclinaison, intensité horizontale et inclinaison magnétique, observés à Milan, pendant vingt-quatre heures de suite, le 24 et 25 Février et Mars, 1841, par Signior Carlini, Forn. Memb. R.S.

5. "Remarks on the Birds of Kerguelen's Land." By R. McCormick, Esq., Surgeon R.N. of H.M.S. Erebus. Communicated by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty

The birds usually met with by the author in this island were petrels and penguins; and besides these, he found two species of gull, a duck, a shag, a fern, a small albatros, and a species of *Chionis*; and also a remarkable nocturnal bird allied to the *Procellaria*. Brief notices are given of the forms and habits of these birds.